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Students' Subvention

To the Editor:

The disclosure of Central Intelligence Agency funding of the international programs of the United States National Student Association demonstrates the deep, corrupting influence of the anti-Communist mania which afflicts our democracy.

Contrary to the claims of one columnist, the C.I.A. did not "prevail on students to work for the aims and ideals of the American Government." Most of us who worked for N.S.A. did so out of personal loyalty to democracy which no outside governmental agency could inspire, much less impose.

The National Student Association was founded by the hard-headed, G.I. generation of college students after World War II. Its origins were international; at that time there simply was no national organization which could in any way represent American student views to our colleagues around the world.

Fundamentally this was—and is—an impossible task. American students, like the American people, have never spoken with a single voice. But N.S.A. held representative democracy as an ideal—a positive value, impossible of perfect attainment, which nevertheless was worthy of our best efforts.

When it became apparent that this ideal was not shared by the International Union of Students, N.S.A. and several European national unions of students set up the International Student Conference.

The conference brought relatively small groups of student leaders together in the name of representative democracy, not anti-Communism. Now we know that it, too, was partially funded by the C.I.A.

As a moderate, liberally oriented organization, N.S.A. successfully defeated an attempted take-over by the extreme left in the 1940's. In the era of McCarthy and the so-called silent

generation, it was driven to the financial wall.

Because N.S.A. refused to play upon the anti-Communist proclivities of American society, it could not attract the voluntary private support it needed to survive. At this point—1952—one or two top officers must have turned in desperation to clandestine C.I.A. support.

Those who first knowingly accepted secret funds surely understood that disclosure of this support would completely undermine N.S.A.'s effectiveness abroad. Once this illicit, *sub rosa* decision was made, succeeding generations of top officers had few qualms about increasing the C.I.A. stake. Budgets grew about tenfold, buildings and other comfortable afflictions ensued. Those for whom N.S.A. spoke never were aware of the C.I.A.

The few who knew prostituted us all.

Those who now claim that the C.I.A.'s money was "well spent and well used" celebrate a victory of expedience over idealism—an irreparable loss to the cause of democracy among the youth of this world.

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